

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

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The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

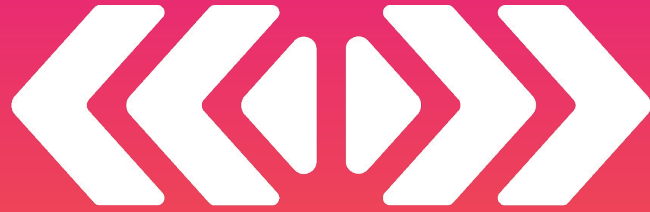
Educational Session

2822 - Enhancing a Transfer Student's On-Campus Experience

Transition Programs and Supports, Special Populations

Living-Learning Programs provide students with the opportunity to thrive both in and out of the classroom in a learning environment that becomes home. The Transfer Experience living-learning community is specifically designed to meet the needs of students who transfer to our institution from a community college or another four-year institution. This presentation will share how Transfer Experience came to be and how we continue to serve our transfer students living on campus.

Allison Silknetter, *Assistant Director, Transfer Student Initiatives*
Virginia Tech



TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

A TRANSFER STUDENT LIVING-LEARNING
COMMUNITY AT VIRGINIA TECH®

Allison Silknetter
Assistant Director, Transfer Student Initiatives
Virginia Tech



Agenda

- Introduction
- What are LLCs and why are they beneficial to students?
- Creation of Transfer Experience
- What Transfer Experience looks like today
- Breakout rooms
- Q&A



About Me

- Elementary school teacher for 8 years
- 2019 began at Virginia Tech as the Program Director for the Transfer Experience LLC
- 2022 began working as the Assistant Director of Transfer Students Initiatives, which includes continued oversight of the LLC

Our Institution



- Large, public, state and land-grant institution located in Blacksburg, VA
- Total student enrollment of around 37,000 and undergraduate enrollment of 30,000
 - 3,031 transfer students
- 1 in 10 VT graduates come to campus as a transfer student

Fall '22



What is a living-learning community?

- Living-Learning Program (LLP) is the umbrella term containing both residential colleges and living-learning communities at Virginia Tech
- Residential colleges are led by live-in faculty principals and focus on interdisciplinary, multigenerational connections
- Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) are niche communities built around a particular theme. Each LLC is led by a Program Director.

Why LLCs?



- LLCs have shown to increase overall satisfaction in college, as well as retention rates and academic performance (Arendsorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016).
- The goals within LLCs are to emphasize involvement within the community and encourage students to seek support to ease their transition to a new university. Students in an LLC resulted in greater intellectual orientation, compared to students who did not live in an LLC (Stassen, 2003).
- When students are placed in a community that relates to one another, it is easier to bond. There is a sense of community, especially when there is an effort put forth from student affairs practitioners to show support towards students (Inkelas et al., 2006).

Fall 2021 - Residential Experience Survey

	All Students	General Population	All LLP	Transfer Experience
My community helped me develop a sense of belonging	82.61	80.17	84.63	91.89
My community helped me make friends	82.61	82.28	83.30	89.19
My community helped me get involved on campus	72.07	70.25	74.95	86.49
My community helped me gain leadership skills	64.72	57.38	68.50	62.16
My community helped me succeed in my coursework	71.49	70.25	72.87	75.68
My community helped me connect to resources around campus	81.61	80.38	83.30	91.89
My community helped promote my personal well-being	77.93	76.58	80.65	91.89
My community enhanced my quality of life at Virginia Tech	81.27	79.96	85.39	91.89
On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend your living learning program to a friend or other Virginia Tech student? (Average score)			7.84	8.31




May 2018

- A spring survey of transfers showed dissatisfaction with campus housing
- VT moved forward with a plan to pilot a transfer student living learning community beginning in Fall 2018



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LLC
Creation -
behind the
scenes

- A memorandum of understanding between Housing and Residence Life and the Office of Student Success Initiatives within Undergraduate Academic Affairs was created
- An LLC advisory committee of campus partners met monthly

LLC Creation - student life

- 69 transfer students lived in the community in two separate Greek life houses
- GA hired as the Program Director, now a full time position
- Weekly curricular and cocurricular events were planned





LLC Creation - Budget

- In lieu of a student fee, funding was provided by Housing and Residence Life for the LLC's first year
- After its initial year, LLC funding now comes from a \$50/semester student fee

Where Are We Now?



Location



- After moving to various residence halls on campus, Transfer Experience settled into a 275 bed residence hall. The LLC occupies 182 of those beds (3 out of 4 floors).

The RA role

- RAs were previously assigned to Transfer Experience without any prior connection
- Now, our RAs are selected from previous Transfer Experience members, specifically selected to aid the transfer student journey



LLC Events

- Weekly socials build community within the LLC and expose students to campus resources
- Found success with social rather than academic events





Transfer FYE

- 1 credit Transfer First Year Experience (FYE) course - UNIV 2114 Unleash Your Hokie Potential
- Optional for all transfer students on campus, but required for new LLC members
- Guest speakers connect students to campus resources
- Former transfer students are hired as class TAs



Role of the Program Director

- Plan, request, market and execute weekly community events
- Teach 1 section of the transfer FYE course
- Review applications for prospective LLC members
- Market the LLC to incoming transfer students
- Run the monthly advisory committee meetings
- Meet monthly with all LLP Program Directors across campus
- Run community social media pages
- Manage community budget

Role of Leadership Council



- Students apply and are chosen to be community leaders
- Run many day-of event logistics
- Contribute to community social media
- Generate event ideas
- President, VP, Secretary, Campus Coordinator, Social Chairs & Members-at-Large



Role of the Returner

- New initiative for Fall '23
- Creating a Pod Program where returning transfer students will act as mentors for new transfers in the community
- Each new transfer will be assigned a small group (pod) with two returning leaders

What's Next on Your Campus?



Resources

Arensdorf, J. , Naylor-Tincknell, J. (2016). Beyond the Traditional Retention Data: A Qualitative Study of the Social Benefits of Living Learning Communities. *Learning Communities Research and Practice*, 4(1), Article 4. Available at: <http://washingtoncenter.evergreen.edu/lcrpjournal/vol4/iss1/4>

Inkelas, K. K., Daver, Z. E., Vogt, K. E., & Leonard, J. B. (2006). Living-learning programs and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(4), 403–434. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-006-9031-6>

Stassen, M. L. A. (2003). Student Outcomes: The Impact of Varying Living-Learning Community Models. *Research in Higher Education*, 44(5), 581–613. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40197323>

Thank you!

Allison Silknetter asilknetter@vt.edu

<https://advising.vt.edu/transfer-student-advising.html>

<https://llp.vt.edu/llc/transfer.html>

